

Use of Temporary Electric Fencing to Eliminate Deer Damage to Sunflower Plantings on the Blue Grass Army Depot

Tom Edwards, KDFWR



Deer exclusion fence/Tom Edwards

The Blue Grass Army Depot (BGAD), which occupies a 15,000 acre area, has average summer deer densities of 1 per 12 acres. In the past, these high deer densities have limited dove field crop options. For example, in 2004, the planting of sunflowers without an electric fence resulted in the total destruction of the sunflower crop from deer foraging. Beginning

in 2006, we began using parallel electric fences, sometimes referred to as "3-wire New Hampshire" fences to deter deer from dove fields. This fence design is powered by a 3-mile solar fence charger and is characterized by two strands of electric fencing placed six feet apart. Fence wire was 7/8" wide "equine polytape ribbon" supported by permanent corner posts and 38" temporary posts on 20' spacing. Both the upper and lower electric ribbons on the outer fence were "hot." To prevent deer from jumping both strands of fence, this original design was modified by placing an additional strand of electric fence in a staggered pattern between the inner and outer fences. We found that this electric fence design is 100% effective for preventing deer damage to sunflower crops. Since 2006, we have employed this fencing design which, at a cost of approximately \$0.50 per linear foot (excluding cost of fence charger), is an inexpensive and effective means of controlling deer damage to relatively small sunflower fields.

